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Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools

TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÒN

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APROBACIÓN DEL DIRECTOR DEL TRABAJO DE FIN DE TITULACIÓN

Magister

Eva Ulehlova
DOCENTE DE LA TITULACIÓN

De mi consideración:

C E R T I F I C A:

El   presente trabajo de fin de titulación: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools" realizado por la profesional en formación: Zhigue Tituana, Heidi Mariangela, ha sido orientado y revisado durante su ejecución, por cuanto se aprueba la presentación del mismo.

Loja, marzo del 2014

f) . . . .
Magister. Eva Ulehlova

DECLARACIÓN DE AUTORÍA Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS

"Yo, **Zhigue Tituana Heidi Mariangela** declaro ser la autora del presente trabajo de fin de titulación: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools", de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Ingles, siendo la Magister. Eva Ulehlova directora del presente trabajo; y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Ademas certifico que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo de investigación, son de mi exclusiva responsabilidad.

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Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana
0703407486

DEDICATION

Thanks to God for giving me life and strength to finish my carreer. I dedicate this research to my husband Walter and my children Iris, Lennon and Analy for their unconditional support during all these years.

Thanks to my mother Norma, my sisters Gladys and Fátima for their patience and love because they always encouraged me to be strong and advised me how to overcome my fears.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

With the aim to become guidance to Ecuadorian high schools to identify main aspects that affect the English teaching/learning process the research titled: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high school" has been developed.

Data collection was done in five private high schools in different cities of Ecuador; fifteen teachers and students collaborated in the process. The information required for the analysis was gathered using techniques such as survey and note-taking and the instruments used were questionnaires and observation formats. Three classes were observed in each high school and after that one student of each class was selected to express his/her opinion of the teaching-learning process.

The analysis of results was done using a quantitative approach and statistical software to present graphic information of the percentages of responses obtained.

The findings revealed that influential factors of English teaching-learning process are class size, classroom space, seating arrangement, and teaching resources.

However these difficulties can be resolved reducing the number of students per class modifying the sitting arrangement classes and providing more teaching material to students.

KEYWORDS: research, high schools, participants, analysis, findings, factors.

RESUMEN

Con el propósito de convertirse en una dirección en los colegios ecuatorianos para identificar los principales aspectos que afectan   el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje se ha desarrollado la investigación titulada: "Factors that influence the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high school".

La recopilación de datos se hizo en cinco colegios privados en diferentes ciudades del Ecuador; quince profesores y estudiantes colaboraron en el proceso. La información requerida para el análisis fue recolectada usando técnicas tales como la que entrevista y la toma de notas y los instrumentos utilizados fueron los cuestionarios y formatos de observación. Tres clases fueron observadas en cada colegio y después de eso se seleccionó un estudiante de cada clase para expresar la opinión del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje.

El análisis de resultados fue hecho utilizando un enfoque cuantitativo y software estadístico con el fin de presentar información gráfica y porcentajes de las respuestas obtenidas.

Los hallazgos revelaron que los factores influyentes en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje son el tamaño de la clase, el espacio del aula, el arreglo de los asientos y los recursos de enseñanza.

Sin embargo, estas dificultades pueden ser resultas reduciendo el número de estudiantes por clases, modificando la disposición de los asientos y proporcionando de más materiales de enseñanza a los estudiantes.

PALABRAS CLAVE: investigación, colegios, participantes, análisis, descubrimientos, factores.

INTRODUCTION

The opportunities of young Ecuadorian people to improve their academic and professional lives are currently affected by their inappropriate English language skills. For that reason, this research titled "Factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools" was done to analyze the factors that may affect the English language teaching-learning process in Ecuadorian private high schools.

The objectives set for this research were: to determine the classrooms conditions which English lessons take place; to identify the characteristics of in-service English teachers; and to determine teachers' instructional competence. Through the identification of the factors affecting the English language teaching-learning process, new improvements could be developed in the English language-teaching field in Ecuadorian private high schools. As a result, teachers will provide a high quality education and English language skills of Ecuadorian high school students will be improved helping students to succeed in academic goals and obtain better job and learning opportunities in life.

Different authors from other countries have studied also the factors that affect the English language teaching-learning process. Because of the importance of their conclusions three studies were considered for being reviewed in this introduction.

Firstly, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) did a research to identify the level of influence of teaching resources, methods and school environment in students' English learning. The researchers found that overcrowded classrooms, lack of materials, and teachers' poor skills in teaching methods are the reasons that affect the quality of learning/teaching English and students' level English language skills. Therefore, it was recommended to authorities to take urgent actions to reduce the number of students in classes and equip high schools with appropriate materials and technology so that students can learn effectively.

The second study was done by Khamkhien (2010) to determine how gender, motivation, and experience in English learning affect Vietnamese and Thai students' language learning. The researchers concluded that motivation was the most important factor affecting students' choices in language learning. Therefore, the investigators recommended teachers to take into account students' motivation to design learning tasks.

The third study was done by Chang (2010) in order to know what factors affect negatively the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching approach in English classes. In

conclusion, the researcher affirmed that CLT is successful when there are enough teaching materials and appropriate training of teachers in using the approach.

The studies above have shown that there are important benefits derived from studying the factors that influence the English teaching-learning process. In the same way, this research looks for giving authorities in private high schools a better approach of the current situation of the English teaching process for helping them to improve the quality of language education and benefit students at the same time.

The benefits of this research are extended also to the researchers because through this experience it was possible to know deeply the development of the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. Finally, others pre-service teachers will find in this research a valuable tool for improving their knowledge about the English language teaching-learning process.

Even though this research found important results that would be useful for authorities and other researchers, it is limited by some factors related to the process of observation since it was evidenced that students and teachers don't behave in a natural way in some classes. Another limitation was related to the fact that teachers did not provide additional information in questions where they were supposed to do it in order to explain better their responses.

METHOD

Setting and Participants

This research was carried out in the cities of Zaruma and Ambato. In those places, five private high schools were selected for interviewing teachers and students in order to know factors that may affect the teaching learning process.

The sample consists of fifteenth teachers who teach classes in the morning, 6 hours per week. Their ages were ranged between 28 to 42 years old and their teaching experience varied between 5 to 14 years.

Regarding the group of students who participated in this research, there was a total number of fifteen learners, one per each observed class, and their ages ranged between 12 to 17 years old. They were selected from different courses between 8th basic year to 3rd senior year.

Procedures

The research process began with the revision of the literature. During this stage, books, magazines and websites were used to find information about the topics considered for the theoretical background.

After the literature review, it was necessary to carry out the field research where five private high schools were selected and teachers and students were invited to participate in the research by answering questionnaires and surveys.

Since this research follows a quantitative approach, questionnaires and surveys were the instruments used to gather data as part of the interview technique. Two questionnaires were used in this research, one for the teachers and another for the students. The teachers' questionnaire consisted of 20 open-ended questions and the students' questionnaire had 14 items. Both instruments aimed to get information about factors related to teachers, classrooms, students and institutions. In addition, the survey was applied only to obtain information about teachers' professional background and their opinions about the positive and negative aspects of teaching English in Ecuador. Besides, this instrument was also used to identify teachers' level of language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CRFRL).

DISCUSSION

Literature Review.

In Ecuador, as in other countries, learning English is a paramount importance for citizens because through the language it is possible to have access to up-to-date information of science, technology, computers and commerce also provide diverse and more choices for further studies in an ever-changing society. However, a report published by EcuadorInmediato (2012) gives account of some results that place Ecuador in the 37th place in Latin American countries in which learners have low levels of English. Specifically, an evaluation applied by SENESCYT to Ecuadorian students who learn English in high schools showed that the average grade was 13 out of 20, considering that in the Ecuadorian education system the minimum average was 16 out of 20. These results indicate that it seems that teachers don't provide appropriate instruction in the English language.

In addition, La Hora (2012) reports that there are not standards for teaching English in Ecuadorian high schools. Besides, educational authorities do not demand teachers to get certificates of language proficiency as a requirement to work in the English teaching field. For that reason, in 2012, an average of 4.000 English teachers was required to take the TOEFL exam and it was expected that they would obtain advanced levels according to the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). In case teachers didn't achieve those levels of proficiency, the Ecuadorian government would provide them with the appropriate training to help them to improve their language skills.

Along with teachers' good language skills, there are other factors related to students, classrooms and institutions that deserve to be investigated in order to find to what extent they influence the English teaching-learning process. Therefore, this section presents a revision of the most important theories of some of those factors and in this way it is provided a strong support for the posterior analysis of the findings in this research. As other authors have also carried out similar investigations, five studies are also included as an important part of this revision.

Teaching approaches and methods.

There is a wide and diverse variety of English teaching approaches and methods. Among the most popular, this section will present different point of view from authors about the Grammar translation method, Natural approach, Total Physical response (TPR), Task Based

Language Teaching (TBLT), Content based Instruction (CBI) and Cooperative language learning (CLL).

The first and most popular English method is the Grammar Translation Method. It is considered by Brown (2001) and Mora (2010) as a method where teachers use the mother tongue to teach vocabulary and expressions. The authors explain that learners translate grammar structures from their native language into English and opposite. In addition, this method emphasizes mechanical practice of language schemes and patterns without focusing too much on meaning. For that reason, teachers do not need to give extensive explanations and learners' interest in contents is not important; they only need to pay attention to the mechanics of language.

On the other hand, Brown (2010) indicates that the Natural Approach was developed by Krashen and Terrell in the 80s and it is based on seven principles related to the way how children learn their mother tongue. In that sense, the target language is taught by exposing learners to a great amount of structures that initially are presented graphically and they are associated with words progressively. In that way, learners notice the relationship between forms and meaning. Later, vocabulary, grammar and phonological structures are presented and taught as they are used in daily life. Mora (2010), also says about this method, "Learners should not be forced to use the Level 1 to generate Level 2 performance. A silent period and insertion of Level 1 into Level 2 utterances should be expected and tolerated".

There is another method where learners are encouraged to use the target language naturally. It is known as Task Based Language Teaching, and about it according to Brown (2010) mentions that activities are the central part of language teaching; they are designed mainly to transmit meaning through communicative activities that aim to solve a problem. Some examples of tasks are exercises to use WH-questions, listening and analyzing extracts from real life situations, modeling and interview and role playing.

Similarly, Content Based Instruction is used to teach language by means of specific concepts and contents in order to express understanding. Specifically, Brown (2010) says, "Through CBI, language becomes the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance of the learner. Language takes on its appropriate role as a vehicle for accomplishing a set of content goals".

From a more interactive point of view, Woolfolk (2007) describes the Cooperative Language Learning as an approach based on a constructive view that remarks the use of elaborated and argumentative activities that help students to learn with a sense of cooperation as occurs in real communities. Besides, this author explains that this approach is appreciated

by teachers for the value of group work and learners' students can through discussions and debates promote development of their knowledge. In addition, supporters of social theory remark the value of cooperative activities for an increase of learners' high mental functions through mastering of reasoning and critical thinking. However, Piaget's social theory con focuses on the relation that exists between individual and the social in sociomoral, affective and personality, and intellectual development on the identity of intellectual operations and social co-operations, and the role of norms, besides followers of Piagetian theory indicates that cooperative learning can lead learners to conflict and disequilibrium of their individual learning development and knowledge and finally it can lead to misunderstanding and questioning of their own learning.

Finally, Brown (2001) and Mora (2010) refer to Total Physical Response as an approach that combines children' mechanism of learning languages; it is said that they comprehend meaning through listening and paying attention to physical gestures. The authors list some of the most important characteristics such as understanding meaning before speaking; use of commands; high levels of motivation; children have several motor activities and a silent period before speaking is developed.

Managing learning.

The set of instructions given in class, time assigned to activities and feedback provided to students are some aspects of managing learning that are considered by Ming-Fak & Wai-Shing (2008) as important features that, "can improve the design of their lessons and provide appropriate activities for their students: well-organized lessons, systematic delivery, activities that can be applied in authentic situations". For that reason, they recommend that teachers should present interesting topics and give clear guidelines for diminishing behavior problems and so they can improve students' level of attention.

In order to avoid that students lose their level of attention in lessons, Dixie & Bell (2009) recommend teachers to give simple and clear instructions. According to them, instructions are appropriate stated when teachers keep them simple; use adverbs to express the desirable behavior and work; and raise students' interest through making questions.

Questions are also part of the feedback process. Brookmart (2008, p. 2) says, "Giving good feedback is one of the skills teachers need to master as part of good formative assessment". In addition, clear learning objectives, lessons and assignments are other aspects related to formative assessment and feedback help learners to establish and evaluate their goals in their path of learning achievement. Therefore, the author remarks that feedback is a powerful

tool for teaching students how to be self confident and how to acquire more practice in language learning.

To achieve learning goals, pupils need to be trained about how to use time effectively in the classroom. As, Stronge (2007, p. 53) mentions, "Time is one of the most challenging constraints a teacher faces". He adds that teachers spend seventy percent of the time in real classroom instruction because the remaining moments are dedicated to do other activities not related to teaching. This author indicates that students' achievement is high when there is increased their learning time, it is accomplished through designing effective lesson plans in which transition of time between activities is smooth, teachers' activities are focused in students, and teachers propose meaningful approaches toward classes for motivating learners.

Lesson design.

Well designed lessons are one of the reasons for which the English teaching-learning process can be successful. Gower, Phillips & Walters (1995) explain that lesson design helps teachers to plan strategically how to use time in relation to the stages of a lesson. Besides, a lesson plan is a physical support that guides teachers; it prevents them from unexpected results in class; and it is a record of what happens in class that allows teachers to have always a model for similar lessons in the future.

In addition, Woodward (2001) considers that lesson design gives teachers and students confidence about the teaching-learning process because they can see the level of progress and success of lessons. Also, lesson planning adds classes a sense of effectiveness because contents, materials and activities are selected and programmed carefully.

A last opinion of lesson design is provided by Butt (2006, p. 21) who says, "A lesson plan is a concise, working document which outlines the teaching and learning that will be conducted within a single lesson". This author explains that a lesson plan has some important elements such as aims, learning objectives, subject content, learning activities, health and safety, resources and timing. According to him, aims define the overall purpose of the lesson and they are broader than learning objectives which are the specific goals that students will achieve during a lesson. The subject content is the piece of knowledge transmitted by teachers and it depends on the level of expertise and experience teachers have. Another component of lesson plans are learning activities, they specify the different stages of learning through learners guided in a lesson class. Some lessons could demand teachers to identify health and safety guidelines in case lessons involve a sense of risk for students. Resources are also important elements of a lesson plan because they help teachers to match students' needs. Finally, timing is a

paramount importance because it is necessary to determine when activities should occur in the lesson.

Similarly, Gower, Phillips & Walters (1995) agree with the previous author's description and mention other parts of lesson plans such as procedure, information about students and anticipated problems. The authors explain that the procedure helps teachers to achieve lesson aims. Information about students gives teachers a general view of the results achieved in classrooms. Anticipated problems add flexibility to lesson plans because teachers can adapt their strategies and procedures to the circumstances.

Class size.

The number of students in a class, known as a class size, is a factor that for many authors influences students' achievement in language learning. In fact, Blatchford (2003) says, "There has been a vigorous debate about class sizes in schools" and he explains that smaller classes have many defenders who argue that teaching is more efficient because teachers usually consider that the smaller the class is, the better results are achieved. However, there are some aspects such as costs, students' characteristics and quality of teaching that does not ensure the success of the teaching-learning process.

Gurian & Stevens (2001) consider that small classes also facilitate control of discipline because students with disruptive behavior can be easily integrated to the class routine. According to these authors, small classes are highly recommended when male population prevails over females because boys are usually more energetic and competitive than girls; therefore they need to work in reduced groups. However, the authors indicate that sometimes economic problems force institutions to admit that classes are overcrowded and those classes with 35 or more students are known as large classes.

 Erickson, Peters & Strommer (2006, p. 220) say, "Important instructional goals probably are more difficult to achieve when class size expands to auditorium proportions, and this is especially true when our goals involve more than retention of information". They believe that large classes can be attractive and productive for students, but research did on class size has demonstrated that teachers in large classes are likely to use lecture methods in order to have all students under the control. In addition, the authors mention that monitoring large classes is specially difficult and overwhelming for teachers because students always demand their attention and it is difficult for them to provide individual feedback.

Classroom space.

The physical space in a classroom is for many authors an important aspect that may influence the teaching-learning process. A first approach is given by Gifford, Steg, & Reser (2011, p. 454) who say "The amount, arrangement, and design of space in educational settings is very important for classroom performance and related behaviors". They consider that numerous students in a classroom may affect the normal development of a class and affect learning, mainly when contents to be taught demand a lot of concentration. In addition, the author explains that teachers and students' feelings are influenced by the classroom space where they interact; sometimes, overcrowded classrooms increase probability of aggression among students. Therefore, the authors indicate that teaching style or resources are not sufficient when high number of students attend classes in reduced spaces.

A similar point of view is exposed by Savage & Savage (2010), for whom high number of students in a space is known as a student density. According to them the high student density in reduced spaces increases levels of anxiety, conflict and social interaction among learners. Moreover, students who do not work well alone tend to misbehave to obtain more attention from their teachers. Therefore, it is exhausting and difficult for teachers to work in overcrowded classrooms because they confront behavior problems and low levels of attention very frequently.

In order to avoid that teachers and students feel stressed out in overcrowded classrooms, Mergen (n. d.) indicates, "The room needs a focus for the teacher's instruction and students need to be able to move around easily. The room must be spacious enough to accommodate everyone and allow for reconfiguring desks while maintaining clear lines of visibility". Therefore, it is necessary to have enough space for accommodating students without affecting lines of visibility. In addition, the author explains that the position of elements in the classroom must be arranged in such a way that promotes effective learning.

Seating arrangement.

The different ways in which teachers ask students to arrange their seats is an important aspect in the teaching process. According to Ronald (2009), students' seats should be changed in relation to learning activities taking into account that space between chairs must be sufficient for allowing students to focus on lessons. This author explains that row formats are practical for almost all activities, especially for individual work because it gives students a lot of independence. On the other hand, clusters can be used for promoting interaction in discussion or debate sessions although chatting and social interaction is a disadvantage of this type of seating arrangement.

Similarly, Marsh (2009) explains also some characteristics of row format and clusters. He considers that students who sit in rows at the front and centre of the classroom are more likely to be focused on lessons than other students who are placed next to the walls or at the back of the classroom. As well he mentions that clusters are useful for exchanging information and encouraging students to establish physical contact among them.

Finally, Richards & Rodgers (2001) specify that row format is suitable for individual work, watching movies or listening activities. These authors mention also that seats arranged in circles are ideal for committee work and discussions. Overall, they remark that before teachers assign learning activities, it is important to give instructions have students are supposed to move chairs. According to the authors, different types of seating arrangement add variety to lessons, students can experience a lot of learning patterns and classes are centered in learners rather than in teachers.

Classroom and/or teaching resources.

The types of teaching resources that teachers select for their classes are important part of lessons. Dash & Dash (2007, p. 122) define materials as "those materials which are quite helpful in improving the quality of teaching and learning." Similarly, Edge (1993) agrees with the authors and explains that teaching resources should be used enthusiastically in relation to students' needs because they visualize a good source of motivation and confidence for learners.

There is a type of teaching resource suitable for different learners' needs. Gower, Phillips, & Walters (1995) explain that visuals are objects such as pictures and photographs that can be used to explain meaning of structures or illustrate colors. Videos are preferred by students because they make classes different and centered in lessons. In addition, the authors indicate that the whiteboard, as an indispensable material in the classroom, should be used carefully to take full advantage of this tool that may be used for teaching vocabulary, explaining grammar, drawing pictures. In the same way, computers demand that students have to be trained about the correct use of these devices in order to avoid any failure.

Classroom observation.

From the point of view of many authors, classroom observation (institution monitoring) brings many benefits to the teaching-learning process. Marshal (2009, p.19) says, "In education, that's been the conventional wisdom as well, with principal's classroom visits and year-end evaluation serving as the main vehicles for monitoring and improving teachers' performance". Even though classroom observation is an excellent instrument to evaluate teachers'

performance, this author explains that there are some negative aspects about it such as the fact that authorities do not have enough time to monitor teachers' classes. In addition, interaction in the classroom changes when teachers and students are being observed and the purpose of monitoring sometimes benefits institutions rather than students.

The negative points about classroom or teacher observation can be decreased by applying different models of supervision such as those proposed by Bailey (2006). He refers to three models or approaches: supervisory option, where the principal or other authority is the responsible for giving feedback because he is the expert; nondirective option, a supervisor observes and evaluates teachers' work without giving any kind of advice or criticism; alternative option, a supervisor helps teachers to find better ways for improving their work. According to the author, power is the key factor that distinguishes one model from the other. In supervisory model, teachers do not have power. On the contrary, nondirective option gives teachers many opportunities for discussing and explaining their work. Similarly, the alternative model allows teachers to clear some aspects of their work but receiving at the same time the appropriate feedback.

Other models of classroom observation are also described by Wajnryb (1992, p. 34) who says, "The observation may be initiated either by the teachers themselves or by the school, as part of a school-based support programmer for teaching staff". In addition, this author states that observation can take place for evaluating teachers beginners or as a learning tool that helps experienced teachers to improve their work.

Learning styles.

Students' different characteristics and personality influence the way they acquire learning. In that sense, Cook (1996, p. 8) says, "Learning styles are the way of educating particularly to an individual to learn best". Similarly, Wood (2008) considers that senses determine the approach that students use to learn and understood the world around them. Therefore, there are different learning styles because learners as individuals have different senses.

According to Wood (2008) and Cook (1996), there are three learning styles that are: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Visual learners are individuals that enjoy learning through images and pictures because they can remember easily the information in their minds. Auditory learners like to acquire information through sounds or by hearing people telling instructions or contents; in this case, teachers can use videos, storytelling and songs. Finally, the authors explain that students with kinesthetic learning style learn better by doing physical activities or movements such as moving hands or giving demonstrations to their peers.

From another point of view, Brown (2007) explains that students learn in the way of a link between cognition and personality, for example reflection and analysis are characteristics for reflective learners and, on the contrary, impulsive learners acquire information because of their sudden emotions. In addition, other factors such as emotion, physical conditions and physiological traits intervene also in the learning process giving as a result other learning styles.

Language aptitude.

Language aptitude is a factor that may influence the teaching-learning process because as Brown (2007, p. 106) says, "Anecdotal evidence would suggest that, for a variety of casual factors, some people are indeed able to learn languages faster and more efficiently than others". Therefore, this author explains that historical research on language aptitude has suggested that eventual language learners need to demonstrate or posses certain kind of characteristics such as discriminating sounds, identifying spelling signs, internalizing meanings, etc. According to the author, aptitude tests applied by institutions are not quite effective and they tend to place students under the wrong categories. Instead, it is recommendable to monitor students and identify the type of strategies and styles they show progress in language learning.

From a similar perspective, Agnihotri et al. (1998, p. 30) defines also aptitude as, "The disposition to be able to do something". He coincides with Saville-Troike (2006) and identify four aspects that MLA tests take into consideration to evaluate students' aptitude for language learning. First, phonetic coding ability that allows learners to recognize the sounds of a language easily; second, grammatical sensitivity for recognizing language patterns; third, rote memory for selecting correct elements to speak fluently; fourth, inductive ability for identifying new language elements.

Another factor that is crucial in measuring students' progress in language learning is intelligence. Agnihotri et al. (1998) explains that some aspects such as verbal, reasoning and concept formation ability are considered to be the main characteristics of intelligent students.

Until now, the most important theories about different components of the English teaching learning process have been reviewed. Then, it is time to present five relevant studies that prove the trustworthiness of the information described previously.

First, refers to Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006) and their research to identify the level of influence of teaching resources, methods and school environment in students' English learning. Teachers and students from six schools from different geopolitical zones in Nigeria participated in this research; they were interviewed and observed to identify the factors that influence frequently teaching and learning. In consequence, the researchers concluded that overcrowded

classrooms, lack of materials, and teachers' poor skills in teaching methods were the cause for the students' low level of language proficiency. Therefore, they recommended authorities taking urgent actions to reduce the number of students in classes and to equip high schools with appropriate materials and technology so that students can learn effectively.

The second study was carried out by Khamkhien (2010) to determine how gender, motivation, and experience in English learning affect Vietnamese and Thai students' language learning. To gather the necessary data, participants were evaluated with a SILL test designed by Oxford and they also answered some questionnaires in order to know their English background. The results showed that motivation was a significant factor that influenced students' choice of learning strategies. In the same way, female students reported to have better strategies than males. Finally, Vietnamese students performed better in communicative strategies than Thai learners because they were taught to use Communicative Language teaching. In conclusion, the researchers considered that motivation was the most important factor affecting students' choices in language learning. Therefore, the investigators recommended teachers to take into account students' motivation in order to design learning tasks.

The third study was done by Barrios Espinosa (2006) and his intention was to know the influence of teachers' strategies in planning and delivering instructions to students. For that purpose, the researcher observed seven teachers' work and found that teachers' poor skills in assessing language learning and low English level affect negatively learning progress of their students. Therefore, the researcher concluded that those students with poor language competencies were affected by their teachers' bad teaching skills. In addition, the investigator recommended teachers to improve teaching training.

A fourth study was conducted by Chang (2010) to know which factors affect negatively the implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching approach in English classes. With that aim, students and teachers were interviewed and the results showed that lack of resources, teachers' poor training in using the approach and reluctant students were the main barriers for the implementation of CLT. In conclusion, the researcher affirmed that CLT is successful when there are sufficient of teaching materials and appropriate training of teachers provided.

The fifth and last study was done by Martin (2004) and his aim was to investigate how teachers' conception of classroom management influences their teaching practice. This study used a qualitative approach and it was carried out for a period of two years, during this time was investigated teachers' background of classroom management in positive learning environments. The results showed that only two teachers were able to manage classes

correctly in the time the investigation took place mainly because they had good knowledge of techniques and strategies for managing groups. Therefore, the researcher concluded that all classrooms are affected by common factors that determine the level of success or failure of classroom management.

For this reason teachers should know those factors and they must be well trained in order to achieve their teaching goals.

Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results

The answers provided by the teachers from the private high schools selected for this research are going to analyze the results through statistical charts. The purpose of this analysis is to determine and discuss factors that influence the English teaching learning process in classrooms. The information gathered in the questionnaires is organized into factors related to teachers, students, classroom and institutions. The data was processed and represented through statistical graphics using Microsoft Excel in order to bring a clear view of the answers that teachers gave.

Factors concerning teachers.

Which level of education do teachers have?
Graph 1
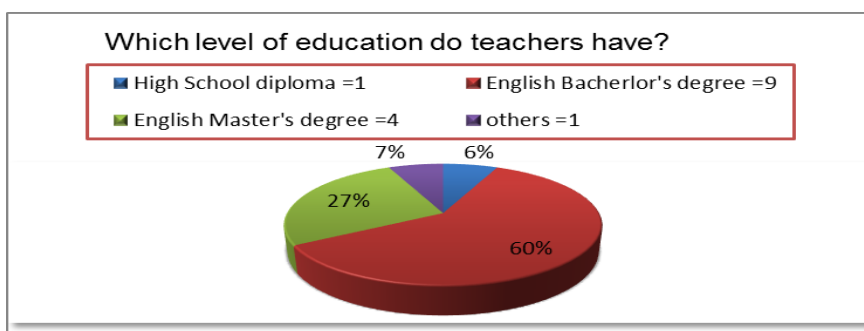
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana
Source: teachers' questionnaire

The information in graph 1 shows the answers that teachers declared about their level of education. It can be observed that: 7% of teachers have only High School Diploma; 60% of

teachers have an English Bacherlor's degree; 27% of teachers have an English Master's degree; and 7% of teachers have other degree.

Regarding teachers' professional experience, they have been teaching English for two, six, ten and twenty years some in the same institution they are working and other in different institutions; this means that they have a wide experience in this field.

Some teachers had learned English in Ecuador and others in England and in the United States; they admired that reading, writing and speaking are the easier subjects to teach and encourage their students to learn English every day.

The interviewed teachers commented that motivation, lack of language practice, low interest for learning the target language are some of the disadvantages of teaching English in a non English speaking country. Moreover, cultural differences, lack of material, students' low language level, discipline, poor English curriculum design are among others main problems that a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador.
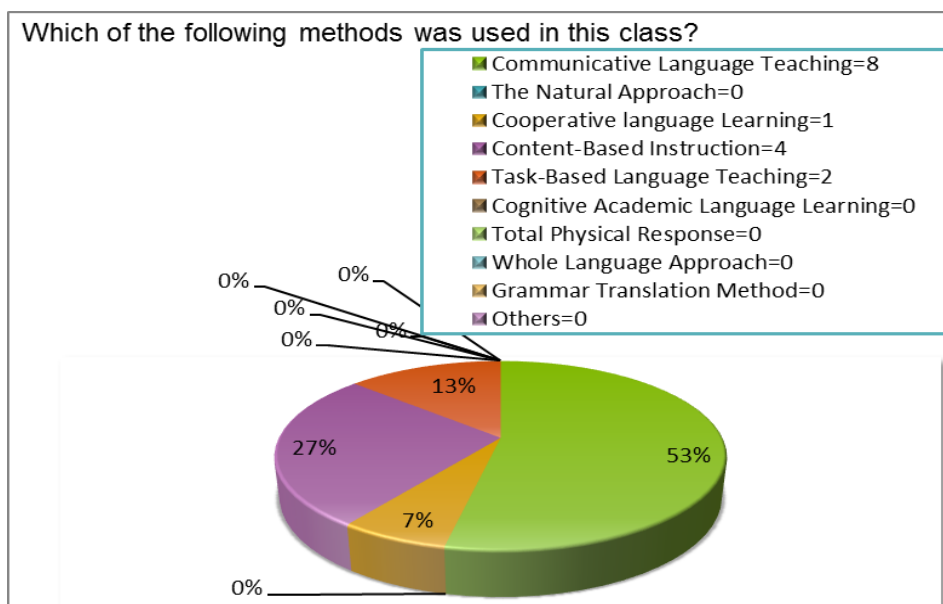
On the other hand, the participants pointed out that job opportunities, communication with the target language, interaction with students and knowledge acquisition are positive aspects derived from learning English and they are also a reward of the profession.

Finally, almost all teachers agreed that they gained professional experience by staying more time in the educational institution. It is also important to mention that all the participants brought clear definitions of the difference between teaching English as foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as second language (ESL). They agree with the explaining that ESL is the language of the community spoken by citizens, while EFL is usually learned in environments where is not the language of the community English.

To sum up, the answers that teachers gave about the different topics of the interview allowed to categorize their language proficiency between C1 and C2; according to the specifications described on the CEFRL, they are fluent enough to express their ideas and thoughts even though the reports of La Hora (2012) and EcuadorInmediato (2012), articles referring about level of Language English of Teachers and students in Ecuador.

Which of the following methods was used in the class?

Graph 2

Which of the following methods was used in this class?

- Communicative Language Teaching=8
- The Natural Approach=0
- Cooperative language Learning=1
- Content-Based Instruction=4
- Task-Based Language Teaching=2
- Cognitive Academic Language Learning=0
- Total Physical Response=0
- Whole Language Approach=0
- Grammar Translation Method=0
- Others=0

Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Regarding the methods that teachers pointed out as the most used in their classes, the Communicative language teaching obtained 53% of responses, followed by the Content based Instruction method with 27% of answers. Other methods such as Task-Based Language Teaching obtained 13% of preferences and 7% of teachers indicated that they use Cooperative Language Learning.

The information above was corroborated through the direct observation because 13 teachers used Communicative Language teaching. This method was combined with others such as Content- Based instructions because subjects such as Science and Social Studies were part of the curriculum. In addition, 10 teachers were observed using Task-Based language teaching which means that students interpreted information from charts provided given. Other teachers used in less proportion the Natural Approach, Whole language approach, and Grammar Translation method.

As another point of view during the observation, four teachers used Total Physical Response to help students to comprehend the meaning of some words such as throw or pick up, listening and paying attention.

It can be said that almost all teachers have good knowledge of methods and they applied them without difficulties, besides it was detected that during the process of teaching-learning

English were used and joined most the specified methods by Brown (2010), such as Content-Based instructions and Total Physical Response.

Do teachers use whole – group activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 3

Do you use whole-group activities to teach your lessons?

■Yes=14   ■No=1

7%

93%
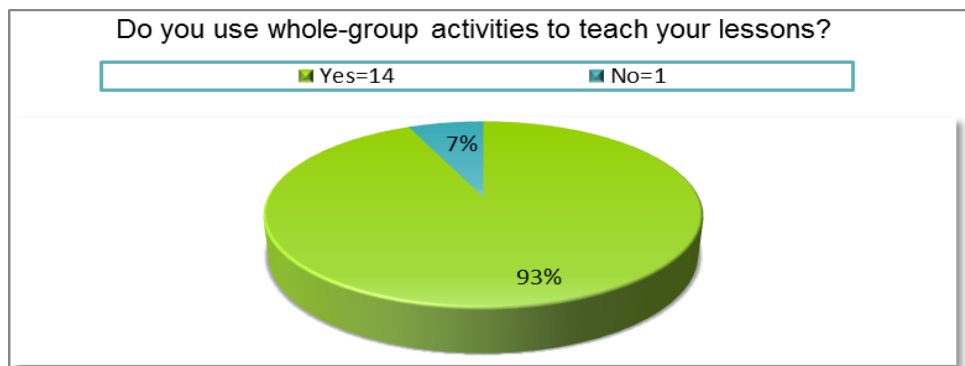
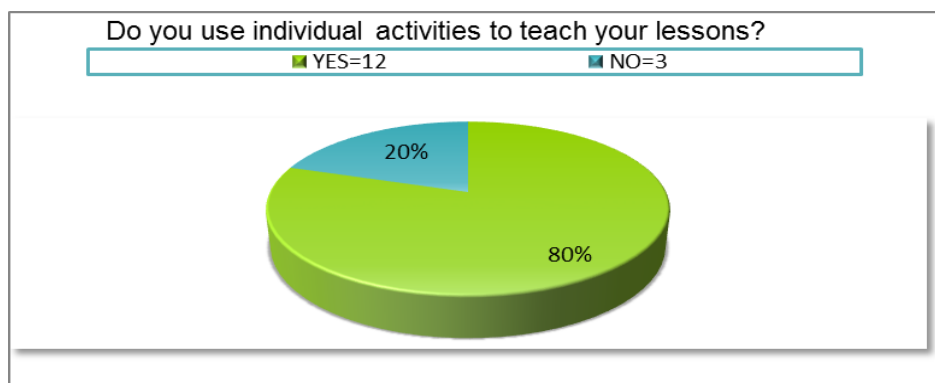Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

The use of whole-group activities obtained 93% of teachers' answers, and only 7% of them indicated that they do not use that type of activities. This information was confirmed by students because they commented that their teachers assigned them activities for interacting among them.

The results of the direct observation showed that whole group activities were used mainly at the beginning of the class. Teachers involved the whole class by asking students questions about the topic of previous lessons; during the time of whole group teaching, all the students participated actively and it caused that classes became noisy but funny. In fact, teachers argued that main reasons for using whole group activities are among others that students can try out the language used recently, all students participated actively, and it was an opportunity to provide feedback to the entire class at once.

Regarding whole-group activities Ming-Fak & Wai-Shing (2008) manifests "appropriate activities for their students: well-organized lessons, systematic delivery, activities that can be applied in authentic situations", therefore, a great number of teachers used whole group activities as a tool to provide students with practice exercises to use the target language and help them in their learning process, students considered that group activities are very beneficial and integrative.

Do teachers use individual activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 4

Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?
YES=12   NO=3

20%

80%

Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 4 shows that 80% of teachers indicated that they used individual activities to teach their lessons and 20% stated that they assigned individual work to their students. It was observed that the majority of teachers had students working individually according to the topics of the lessons.

Teachers commented about individual work that it allows them to identify students' level of progress, needs or to know how deep they have taught the contents during the class.

It seems that this type of working activity is usually preferred by teachers because students do not have to change position of seats as occurs in group work. In fact, some teachers commented that because of lack of time it is better to use individual activities like write and read a short essay in class, written exercises and homework, etc.

With respect to the time used for individual activities it is very important the view that Stronge (2007, p. 53) express indicating that time is the most challenging limitation, that is the reason why teachers have to use these activities frequently.

Therefore, individual activities were preferred by teachers because it is a good activity to evaluate the level of students' improvement of their skills and abilities in order to achieve the target language.

Finally, even all participant teachers considered that individual work was the best way for teaching their English lessons also they agreed it is good when the class has not a large number of students.

Do teachers use group work activities to teach their lessons?

Graph 5
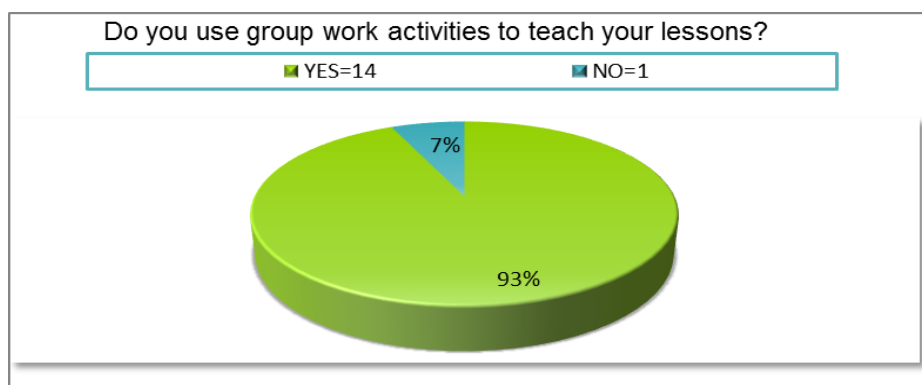
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Group work received also a great percentage of responses. Graph 5 shows that 93% of teachers indicated that they use this type of activity to teach their lessons, and only 7% of the participants stated the opposite.

The use of group work activities was corroborated by students' questionnaire because they indicated that their teachers assigned them to do activities in order to interact with their classmates.

During direct observation, 14 teachers asked students to work in groups according to the topic of the lessons while the mostly used shape was a circle of working in group. Despite teachers' instructions to help students to complete the activities correctly, their basic level did not allow them to interact actively using the target language. It was observed that teachers encouraged them to use the language by indicating them to repeat what they had said in English.

In order to maximize interaction between students, some teachers wrote on the board expressions that students had to use for interaction. In this sense, some of the observed groups applied them and they looked motivated by doing this.

Therefore, as Richards & Rodgers (2001) explained students grouped in circles were ideal for committee work and discussions.

Do teachers use English most of the time in their classes?

Graph 6

Do you use English most of the time in your classes?
YES=15   NO=0
0%
100%
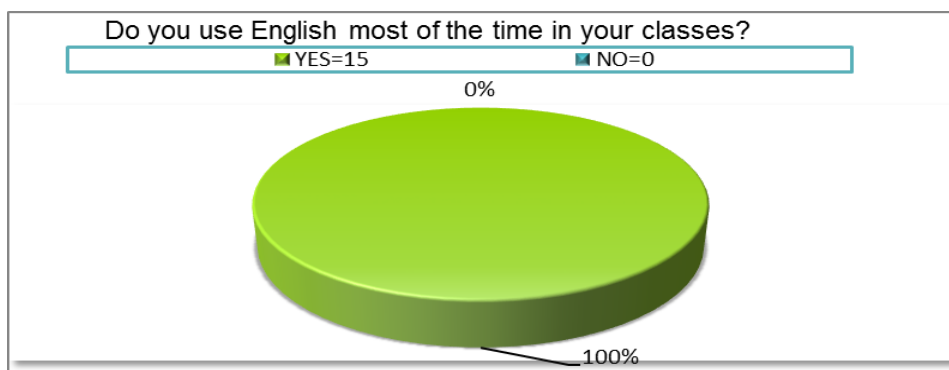
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Survey results of question in Graph 6 from Teacher´s Questionnaire shows that all teachers use English most of the time in their classes, the results were obtained through observation revealed that 8 teachers spoke in English 100% of the time and 7 teachers used the target language 75% of the time.

This allows to confirm that teachers have good English level of proficiency since they were able to communicate instructions and commands to the class without hesitation using the English language accurately.

It is very important the recommendations given for Dixie & Bell (2009) about using simple and clear instructions according to this teachers used simple words according to students' language level and the majority of time teachers draw pictures for helping students to comprehend what they had said.

All participant teachers commented when they use English during class they realize students can understand everything, and in case of doubt the students knew the questions must be done in English and all the class worked to find out the correct answer.

As it was mentioned on the analysis of results of graph 1, almost all teachers' level of proficiency was identified between C1 and C2 according to the CEFR; it is a positive aspect that helps students in the observed classes because they have good input of language from their teachers.

Do teachers plan their lessons?

Graph 7
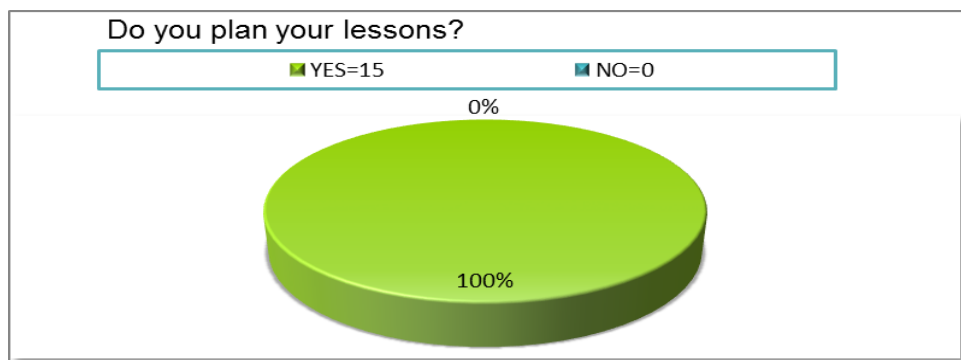
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

It can be seen in graph 7 that all teachers answered yes to the question about lesson planning. During direct observation, all teachers distributed the time of the different activities planned for the class. Similarly, almost all teachers wrote the lesson topic and introduced the theme of the class; they also used materials and resources.

On the other hand, other important elements of lesson plans such as objectives, warm-up activities, guided or individual practice and review/assessment were taken into account by a minority of teachers. According to Butt (2006), lesson objectives are the specific goals that students will achieve during class time. In this sense, it would be important for students to know exactly what the lesson intended to teach them because they could have evaluated their level of progress. Another element that teachers did not apply in their class was warm-up activities; it would have engaged students to work in the class effectively.

An interesting point derived from the analysis of teachers' answers and direct observation is the fact that 80% of comments related to the question indicate that lesson plan is important for teachers. They declared that organization, teaching time, students' needs and motivation, development of students' skills are some of the reasons to plan the lessons. However, as the analysis describes, teachers do not act according to their thoughts. Woodward (2001), mentions some benefits of lesson planning states that confidence is an effect of a good selection of contents, materials, and activities because teachers and students can see the level of progress of the lessons.

In relation to the valuable theory provided by Woodward (2001), it is important to mention that the Ministry of Education has been paying teachers' attention to the importance of lesson planning as a tool to improve the quality of classes. Currently, educational authorities have

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made great efforts for providing teachers training in order to develop awareness of the purpose of lesson planning in achieving the educational objectives of the curriculum.

Therefore, teachers who applied the important aspects of lesson plans in the observed classes were able to achieve some of the planned objectives to benefit students' learning process.

Do teachers consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach their lessons?

Graph 8

Do you consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instructions to teach your lessons?

YES=15   NO=0

0%

100%
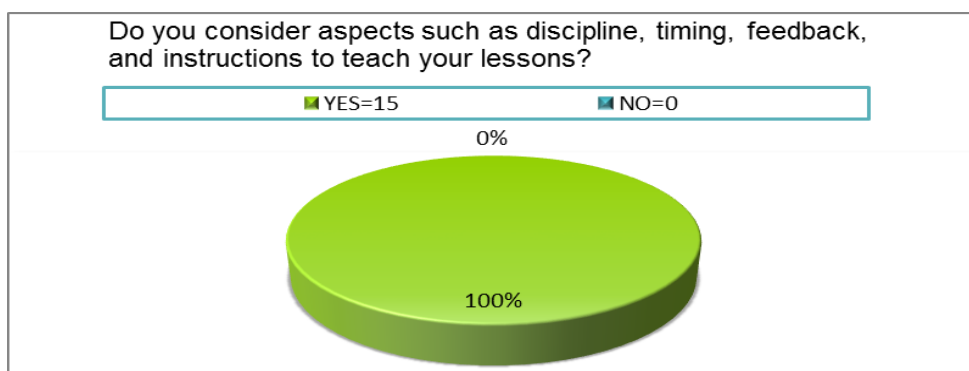
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 8 shows that all teachers indicated that they applied discipline, timing, feedback and instructions to teach their lessons. About those aspects, students affirmed that their teachers control discipline. In fact, direct observation showed that all teachers were able to manage discipline correctly, thus giving the classes a sense of being calm that helped students to work well.

On the other hand, that what encouraged students to work effectively was related to timing. Almost all the observed teachers assigned time at the beginning of the activities; therefore, students knew that they had to focus on the tasks to finish on time. In this sense, Stronge (2007) indicated that students' achievement is high when they increase their learning time because teachers wisely distribute time to assign activities and give instructions.

An important characteristic of the observed teachers was their ability for giving clear instructions and students confirmed this aspect because all of them answered yes to the question about the clarity of instructions. It was observed that teachers always explained students how to develop the activities by modeling exercises on the board or giving examples. After that, teachers usually asked some students to explain how to proceed each activity as a

way to ensure that the whole class had comprehended given instructions. It can be said that the way teachers explained the activities met the theory given by Dixie & Bell (2009) when they stated that instructions must be simple and can raise students' behavior through making questions.

Questions were not used only to ensure that students had comprehended instructions about different activities. The observed teachers asked students questions at different stages of the lesson to evaluate how well the students had understood the contents.   In fact, the interviewed learners indicated that their teachers always use questions to know whether they need to improve their learning process.   According to, Brookmart (2008), he remarks that feedback is a powerful tool for teaching students how to be self- confident and how to acquire more practice in language learning.

As a result of the analysis made above, it can be concluded that the majority of observed teachers had good skills in managing learning.   Direct observation confirmed all the aspects mentioned previously and it allows mentioning that the flow of the observed classes was smooth because students were correctly controlled, guided and reinforced during the whole learning process. It can be said that managing learning is a factor that influences positively the teaching-learning process.

Factors concerning students.

Do teachers consider students' needs to teach English successfully*?*

Graph 9
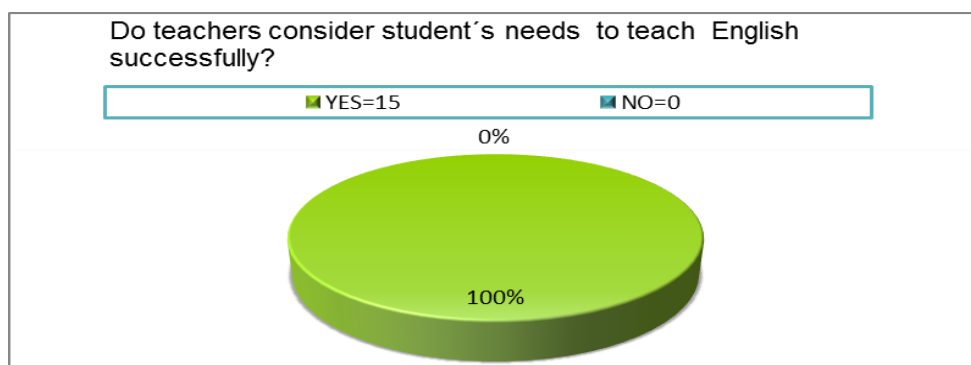
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana
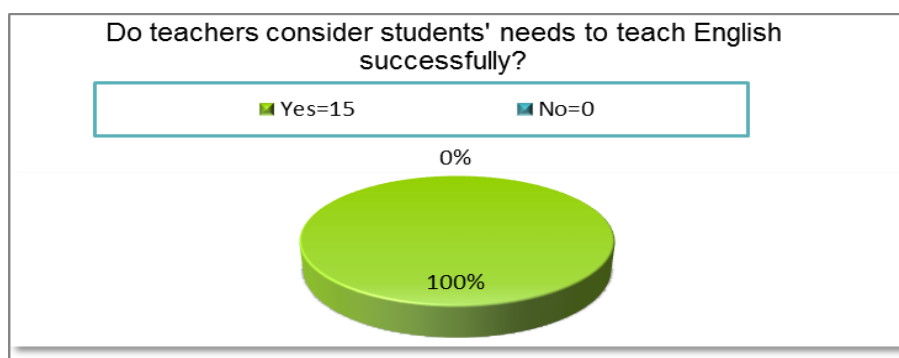
Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 9 shows that all teachers stated that they taught their classes in relation to students' needs. According to the answers of the students' questionnaires, learners like the way

classes are taught. In fact, it was observed that teachers used visual aids such as pictures and flashcards; audio resources such as tape/cd recorders; and they involved students in competitions games using the board. In this way, the teachers stimulate students' senses in order to help them to understand better the contents. Therefore, as Wood (2008) states different senses are related to different learning styles.

When it comes to learning styles some authors such as Wood (2008) and Cook (1996) argue, there are three learning styles that are: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. This means that they enjoy learning through images, sounds, and doing physical activities. In conclusion, the observed teachers motivate students to use their senses in order to make learning meaningful for them.

Do teachers consider students' level to teach English successfully?

Graph 10

Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana
Source: teachers' questionnaire

All teachers indicated that they do consider students' level to teach English. Students stated that the type of activities developed in class were easy. These results were confirmed through direct observation because the types of activities assigned by teachers were based on the textbook used in each course.

For instance, it was observed that in 8th course students completed sentences using past tense of the verbs and learners in 4th senior year practiced the use of modal adverbs. All those activities were correctly developed by almost all students and the minority of them received support from their teacher to complete the exercises. Also, the teachers asked students who seemed confused to come to the board for explaining them how to work each activity.
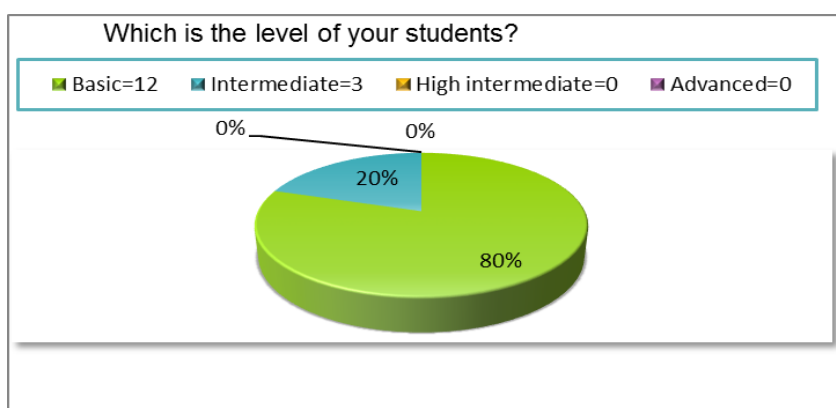
According to this, Gower, Phillips & Walters (1995) consider that with the information about students and anticipated problems provide to teachers a general view of the results

achieved in classrooms, and according to the circumstances teachers can adapt strategies and procedures, teachers' comments, through determining the students' level of English it is possible to carry out some actions such as identifying the concepts and skills which need to be reinforced, planning class activities, etc.

In consequence, the level of English is used by teachers as an indicator to plan the strategies to be used in the lessons.

Which is the level of the students？

Graph 11

Which is the level of your students?

■ Basic=12 ■ Intermediate=3 ■ High intermediate=0 ■ Advanced=0

0%   0%

20%

80%

Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

The percentage in graph 11 shows that 80% of teachers categorized their students in a basic level and 20% of them stated that the level of English of their pupils was intermediate level. These results coincided with observations done in class because not all students were able to speak English correctly and frequently they used their native language to ask questions or to interact with their peers.

During the observation to determine the Language English level of the students was considered the skill to understand and speak English and the way of answering some questions.

Teachers of the institutions with intermediate learners were very optimistic about the future of the students because they considered their disciples have a strong English basis and more opportunities to continue studying in another countries.

On the other hand, most teachers considered that even the effort done for all the class their students have an English basic level because the time assigned for teaching English language is too short, besides the materials provided and the classroom space are not enough

and every student learns in different way, however teachers should bear in mind Brown (2007, p. 106) about that sometimes aptitude tests place students under wrong categories.

Regarding the students who possess intermediate level of English, they belong to a group of students in a bilingual high school where the majority of pupils have been studying English since kindergarten. Therefore, the students' level of English was good and they comprehended well all the contents and instructions given by their teachers. In addition, this course had a specialization in tourism and they did presentations about touristic activities. Also, the interaction between teachers and students was only in English.

Factors concerning classrooms.

How many students are in the observed classes?

Graph 12
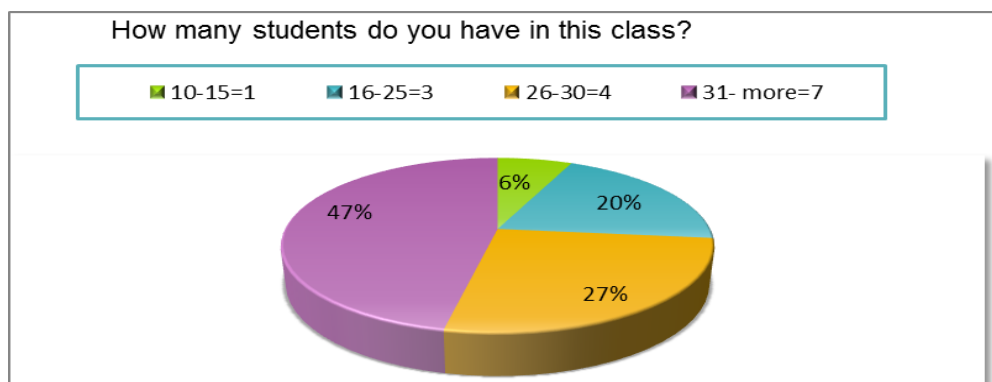
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 12 shows that almost half of the teachers, 47%, indicated that there were 31 or more students in the classroom. 27% of teachers mentioned that they work with 26 to 30 students in class. Another group of participants, 20% stated that they had 16 to 25 learners in their classes. Finally, 7% of teachers pointed out that they had 10-15 students.

The percentages of responses given by teachers were consistent with the number of students observed in each classroom and it was corroborated with the list that each teacher had. There were six classrooms where teachers worked with groups of 32 learners; in four classrooms there were 26 students; 20 students in three classrooms; and in one classroom there were only 15 students. In the last classroom, the number of pupils was low because of the specialization of tourism.

About small classes Gurian & Stevens (2001) consider that they facilitate discipline control and student incorporation to the class routine, according to this all teachers agreed that it is better working in classes with small students number, because students feel comfortable and English learning skills develop faster than classes with large students number.

It should be emphasized that in all the institutions where the research took place the students were very respectful with teachers and had a dynamic participation in class.

Do teachers feel comfortable with the number of students they are working with?

Graph 13

Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

YES=4   NO=11

27%

73%
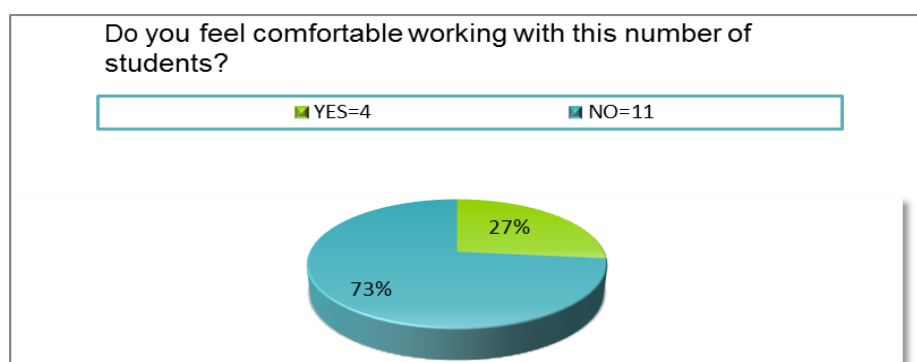
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 13 shows that more than half of teachers indicated that they did not feel comfortable with the number of students they were working with. On the other hand, the majority of students indicated in the questionnaire that class size helped them to work in class. This means that students did not feel dazed by the number of peers in the class.

Unfortunately, the number of students in the observed classes did not allow to define whether classes were small or large as authors such as Gurian & Stevens (2001) and Erickson et al (2006) do not provide information of specific ranges for each type of class size.

However, Erickson, Peters & Strommer (2006) explain that large classes are challenging for teachers to achieve the teaching-learning goals and monitoring is hard to them because students always demand their attention and it is difficult to provide them with individual feedback. Actually, the teaching-learning process in the classes with 31 and more students meets the authors' description. Graph 12 showed that more than half of teachers worked with up to 32 students, and direct observation corroborated that interaction among them was quite difficult because students did not follow instructions immediately. Moreover, they spent a lot of time by organizing group work activities and made a lot of noise. Even though students'

behavior was acceptable, there were some classes where teachers to had to pay attention some learners' because they bothered their classmates or did not work correctly.

On the other hand, direct observation in the classes with less than 30 students showed that teachers were able to work with their students correctly and some students' attempts to interrupt the class were controlled by asking them questions about the topic of the lesson or involving them in activities such as working on the board or showing what they had done. As a result, the characteristics of the teaching learning process in those classrooms coincided with the description given by Gurian & Stevens (2001) about small classes. The authors mention that they facilitate the control of discipline because students with disruptive behavior can be easily integrated to the class routine.

It can be concluded that class size is a factor that influences the teaching-learning process in the observed high schools because large classes demand from teachers more effort and time to achieve the goals of the lesson than small classes. However, it does not means that large classes are necessarily impossible to manage. In fact, Erickson, Peters & Strommer (2006) confirm that teachers can make lessons for students more attractive and productive. Therefore, a combination of strategies for managing learning and meaningful teaching could improve the teaching-learning process in the observed classes.

Do teachers have enough space to work with the group of students they have been assigned?

Graph 14

Do you have enough space to work with this group of students?

| YES=4 | NO=11 |

27%

73%
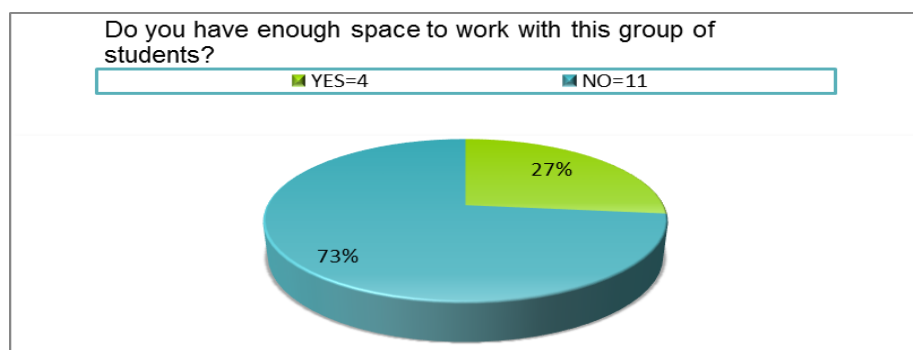
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 14 shows that more than half of teachers stated that there was not enough space to work in the classroom. However, students indicated that classroom space helps them to learn. It seems that they perceived that there was enough room in their classrooms to work in relation

with the activities assigned by teachers.   Those results can be interpreted from teachers and learners' point of view.

The percentage of teachers' answers coincides with the results of graph 12 and 13 because they work with 31 students and more , and this showed that class size influences their teaching process because it is more demanding for them to control and organize the students and teach in large classes. However, it was described in graph 5 that teachers were observed using group work in 14 classes. Those results indicated that though teachers consider that classroom space was not appropriate in relation to the number of students in the classroom, they make an effort to involve students in learning activities that help them to learn.

Teachers' efforts to provide students with better opportunities for learning English is perceived by students as a sign that classroom space is good for the number of students in the classroom because they participate in the learning activities assigned by their teachers. In fact, all students indicated also in the questionnaire that they liked the way teachers taught their classes.

Even though students' opinions towards the teaching-learning process were positive; it is important to remember that teachers showed difficulties in organizing and managing the activities in the classroom. It is appropriate to mention what Gifford, Steg, & Reser (2011) describe about classroom space. They consider that numerous students in a classroom may affect the normal development of a class and affect learning, mainly when contents to be presented are complex and demand a lot of concentration. It was observed that students in large classes took more time to get involved in the lessons because they talked due to the short distance between their seats. This is interpreted by Savage & Savage (2010) as an increase in social interaction due to the high number of students in a reduced space.

In addition, the reduced space between the students' seats made difficult for teachers and students to organize the activities that required group interaction, the level of noise in the classroom increased a lot, making learners argue and complaining that they were not able to work correctly.

Another situation observed in relation to classroom space was the experience of students sitting at the back of the room; they were not able to see clearly the contents written on the board. This situation forced them to stand up constantly to see better what they had to copy, and it affected the harmony of the class.

To sum up, classroom space is a factor that influences the teaching-learning process in the observed classes because it affects the normal progress of the activities during the lessons and the quality of work of the students.

Do teachers arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for their classes?

Graph 15
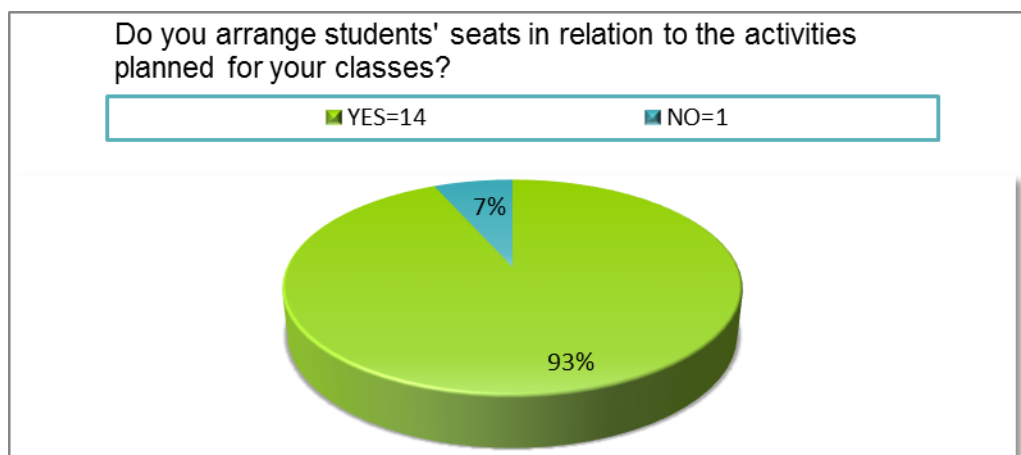
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

It can be observed in graph 15 that almost all teachers indicated they do arrange seats in relation to the learning activities and this was corroborated by students because all of them answered that they liked the way teachers had organized seats to work in the classroom.

It was described in graph 4 and 5 that teachers organized students in individual and group work activities. For individual work seats were always placed in rows   and circle was the format used for working in groups.

Row and circle seating arrangement was more appropriate in small than in large classes because there was enough classroom space. Specifically, classes with 26 and less students were observed as working more productively than those that had over 30 learners because seats were separated and it allowed students to work individually without visibility problems as the distance to the board was good. In addition, the space between seats did not promote talking students to each and they were able to accommodate chairs and desks in order to work in groups.

On the other hand, classes with 30 and more students did not take advantage of row and circle seating arrangement due to reduced space in the classroom. This made complications for teachers and students to move seats for working in groups, and individual work was not effective for the students sit far from the board.

According to Richards & Rodgers (2001), different types of seating arrangement add variety to the development of lessons, students can experience a lot of learning patterns, and classes are centered in learners rather than in teachers. In fact, all the observed teachers tried

to maximize the benefits of different seating arrangement, but it was influenced by classroom space.

In consequence, seating arrangement is a variable that depends on the classroom space available. Enough room allows teachers to vary the position of students' seats in order to make lessons more effective and it makes possible to add variety to the daily activities that learners are assigned to.

How many students do teachers think is the appropriate number to teach English?
Graph 16
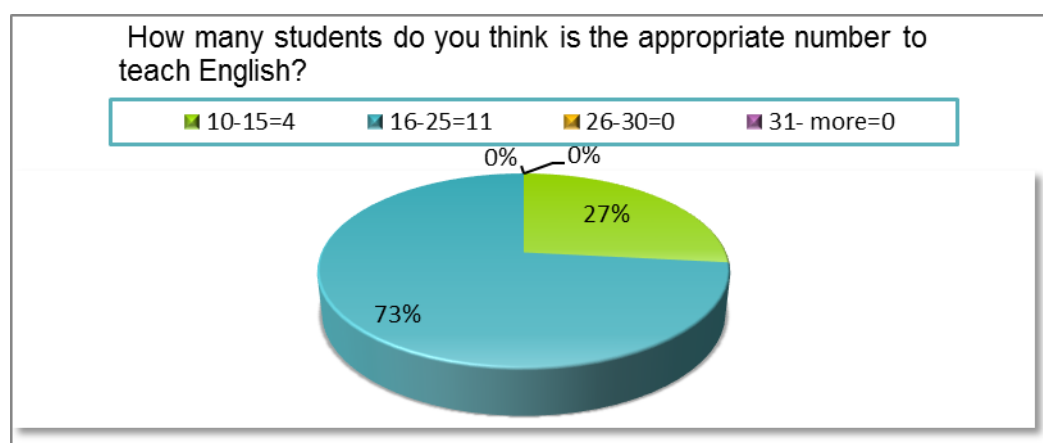
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana
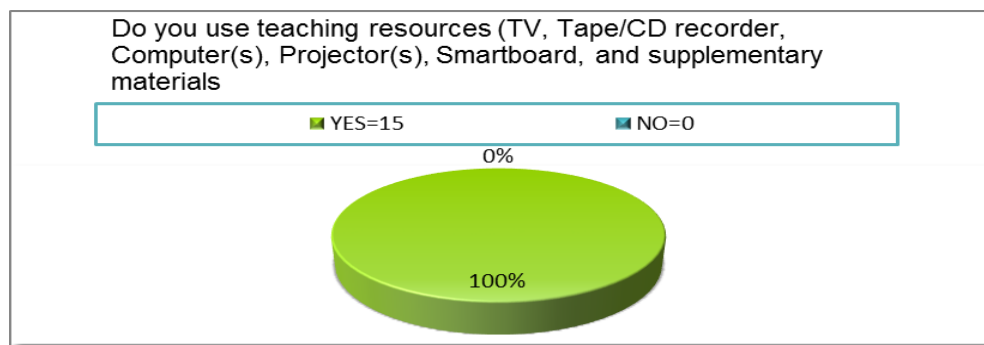Source: teachers' questionnaire

Graph 16 shows that an important segment of teachers,73% consider that the amount of 16-25 is an appropriate number of students to teach their classes while 27% would prefer very small groups of 10 to 15 pupils. These answers may be close related to the results analyzed on graph 14 and 15.

As the previous analysis showed, it was observed that large classes represented for teachers more effort and time trying to organize learning activities and seating arrangement. In addition, students experienced also difficulties such as poor visibility due to the distance from the board and increase in social interaction because of high number of students in classroom. Therefore, those aspects cause that teachers favor small classes.

According to Gurian & Stevens (2001), small classes facilitate control of discipline through the systematic integration of problematic students to the learning process. However, reduction of the number of pupils represents high economic investment for some institutions.

Do teachers use teaching resources?

Graph 17

Do you use teaching resources (TV, Tape/CD recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials

YES=15   NO=0

0%

100%

Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

In graph 17 it can be observed that all teachers stated that they use teaching resources in their classes and it was corroborated by the students because they indicated in the questionnaire that their teachers used materials in their lessons.

Some of the materials that teachers used in the lessons consisted of flashcards, posters, audio resources, computers and projectors. There were other types of materials used also in some high schools such as supplementary materials (realia, worksheets) and smart boards.

All those materials mentioned above were used correctly by the observed teachers and their usage met the descriptions given by Gower, Phillips, & Walters (1995) who explain that visuals and audio visual materials make classes different and centered in lessons.

In conclusion, teaching resources facilitated the students' English learning process because through visual representation of meaning learners were able to acquire the information easily.

Do teachers consider appropriate the resources they have in class?

Graph 18
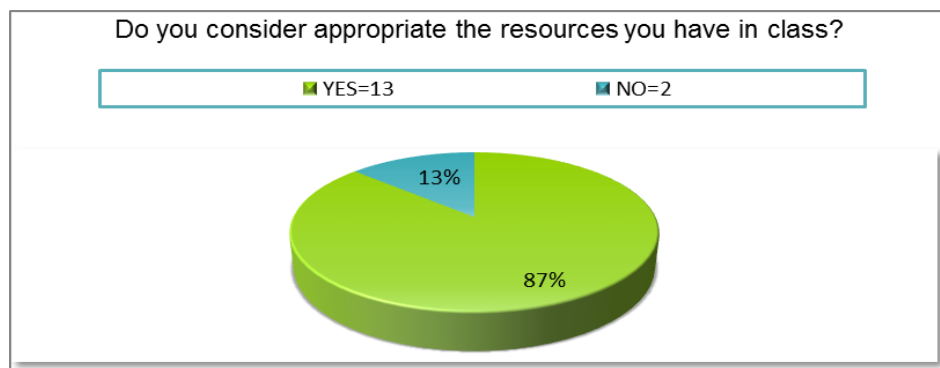
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

The results in graph 18 show that almost all teachers in percentage of 87% indicated that teaching resources are appropriate for the purpose they have been for used, while only 13% think the opposite.

It is worth of mentioning that these results are influenced by the resources available in the private high schools selected for this research because the majority of them are in the city of Ambato and they are well known for their long-time educational prestigious. This means that they had sufficient resources available for teachers to use in their classes. As a result, the use of a variety of materials caused a positive effect in students' learning process because it was observed that they were engaged in the process of learning and they were attentive to the contents.

On the other hand, the institutions located in the city of Zaruma were characterized by a lack of teaching materials such as computers, CD tape recorders and smart boards. Instead, teachers used materials that they made at home such as flashcards and posters. Even though those resources were correctly designed and helped students to focus on the topics of the lesson, learners looked less participative than their peers from the high schools in the city of Ambato. This means that the variety of the materials available in the classroom affects to some extent the teaching-learning process however teacher's creativity plays a very important role to motivate students during the teaching learning process.

Gower, Phillips, & Walters (1995) consider as teaching resources objects such as pictures and photographs, videos, the whiteboard and computers but opposite to this opinion not all observed institutions have the necessary resources for teaching English.

Factors concerning educational institutions.

Does the institution review lesson plans?

Graph 19
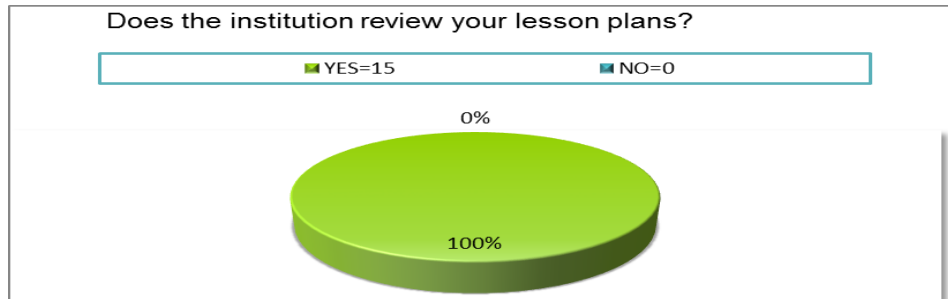
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

Regarding question in graph 19 the 100% of participant teachers indicated that the Institution proceed to review the English Teacher lesson plan when the high school year starts.

Bailey (2006) states a supervisor helps teachers to find better ways for improving their work , in general, it was observed that an important group of teachers seemed to have their plans checked by an authority because, as it was mentioned in graph 7, teachers applied different aspects of their lesson plans in their classes.

Also, according to the results all the teachers from the observed high schools indicated that their lessons plans are reviewed as a requirement of the planning process. Those teachers indicated that authorities had reviewed their plans once a week in some institutions and once a month in others.

The surveyed teachers mentioned supervisors of Ecuadorian Ministry of Education are constantly checking that teachers apply the lesson plan presented at the beginning of the high school year.

Does the institution monitor teaching?

Graph 20

Does the institution monitor your teaching?

YES=12   NO=3

20%

80%
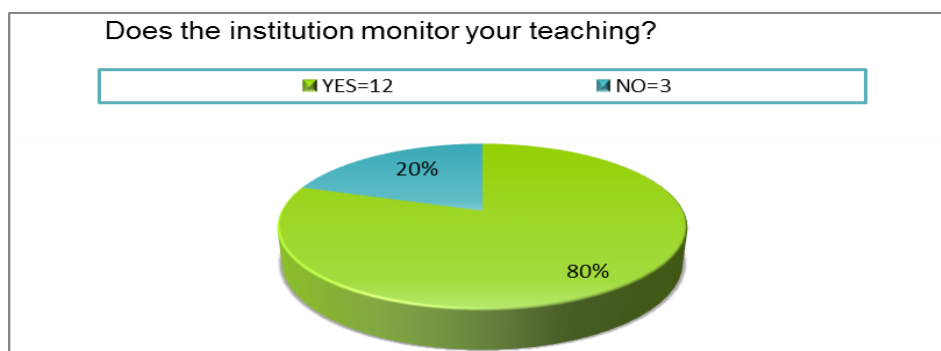
Author: Heidi Mariangela Zhigue Tituana

Source: teachers' questionnaire

This question helps to determine if the teacher is supervised or not, regarding the monitoring process of the English classes, 80% of teachers indicated that an authority evaluated the development of the teaching-learning process in the observed institutions, while the 20% of them stated the opposite answering that the institution authorities never supervise their English teaching.

About the English Teaching monitoring frequency the participants answered: three indicated that classes are observed once a week, five once a month and four choose the option other, it is important to know that this inspection only happens in the institutions located in the city of Ambato, also the results show that procedures are more formal and high school authorities are worried about detecting any difficult during teaching process in the mentioned city.

Besides teachers who receive any supervising commented they need monitoring during English class to improve teaching skills and focus in what should be corrected during the English class to maximize students learning.

Unfortunately, the teachers' testimony was the only available data for analyzing this question, as it was not possible to observe any monitoring process during the classes.

Regarding monitoring teacher Wajnryb (1992, p. 34) says that observation can take place for evaluating teachers beginners or as a learning tool that helps experienced teachers to improve their work, according to this all participants considered it is essential the institution authorities work in a plan to supervise their English teaching because this will help to their professional growth and achieve a higher-level education for the students.

Conclusions

- The results of this research showed that factors that influence the English teaching-learning process are class size, classroom space, teaching resources and seating arrangement.

- The number of students in the observed classes was over 30 in almost all the cases. For that reason, it affects the quality of the classes because large classes demand from teachers more effort and time to achieve the goals of the lesson than small classes.

- Classroom space is a factor that influences the teaching-learning process in the observed classes because it affects the normal development of the activities during the lessons and the students' quality of work.

- Most teachers preferred to develop the teaching-learning process in classes with less than 30 students because the work and activities were more organized and favored students' participation,

- All teachers arranged seats in relation to learning activities, and row and circles were the formats mostly used in classes. However, the reduced space in large classrooms affected the effectiveness of the different sitting styles because students had difficulties to move their seats.

- Almost all teachers used teaching resources in the observed high schools. Nevertheless, the teaching-learning processes in institutions that had more and modern materials available for the teachers were more effective due to its variety.

Recommendations

- The observed institutions should reduce the number of students per class in order to make the teaching-learning process more effective as crowded classes affect the normal development of the activities due to high level of noise.

- Teachers could vary the formats of seating arrangement used in their classes in order to more variety to the lessons. For instance, clusters would improve exchange of information among students and this format do not need that they move seats across the classroom.

- It would be recommendable that teachers from the institutions with fewer resources make an effort to provide students new experience with teaching materials. For example, they can use realia or use the whiteboard for playing games that bring students more interaction during the classes.

- Teachers in the institutions with fewer resources could involve students in the elaboration of teaching materials. In that way, learners would feel more engaged in the teaching-learning process.

- As class monitoring would give teachers feedback about the teaching-learning process, it is advisable that all institutions implement this practice in order to benefit both teachers and students.

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ANNEXES

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Which level of education do you have?

High school diploma ( )	English Bachelor's Degree ( )	English Master's degree ( )
Others: _____		

2. Do you consider Students' needs to teach English successfully?

Students' Needs *(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

3. Do you consider Students' level to teach English successfully?

Students' Level *(Basic, Intermediate, High Intermediate , and Advanced)*	
YES ( )	NO ( )

4. Which is the level of your students?

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

5. Which of the following methods was used in this class? *(check only 1)*

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

6. Do you use whole- group activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

7. Do you use individual activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

8. Do you use group work activities to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
Why? _____ _____		

9. Do you use English most of the time in your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

10. Do you plan your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

11. Do you consider aspects such as discipline, timing, feedback, and instruction to teach your lessons?

YES ( )	NO ( )

12. How many students do you have in this class?

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

13. Do you feel comfortable working with this number of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

14. Do you have enough space to work with this group of students?

YES ( )	NO ( )

15. Do you arrange students' seats in relation to the activities planned for your classes?

YES ( )	NO ( )

16. How many students do you think is the appropriate number to teach English? *(check only 1)*

10 - 15 ( )	16 - 25 ( )	26 - 30 ( )	31 - more ( )

17. Do you use teaching resources (TV, Tape/Cd recorder, Computer(s), Projector(s), Smartboard, and supplementary materials)?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Which ones?	
_____ _____	

18. Do you consider appropriate the resources you have in class?

YES ( )	NO ( )
Why?	
_____ _____	

19. Does the institution review your lesson plans?

YES ( )	NO ( )	
If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____ _____

20. Does the institution monitor your teaching?

YES ( )	NO ( )	

If yes, how frequently?		
Once a week	Once a month	Other_____ _____

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR(desde 8vo básica 3ro bachillerato):	

1. Does the teacher consider Students' needs to teach English?

Students' Needs(age, personality, attitude, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles)*
YES ( )   NO ( )

* It can be recognized based on the variety of activities (visual, audio, audiovisual, realia, and on-line) applied, and students' reaction to them.

2. Which is the level of the students?*(Check 1)*

*Students' Level			
Basic ( )	Intermediate ( )	High Intermediate ( )	Advanced ( )

* It can be recognized based on the material they are using or placement done by the institution.

3. Which of the following methods are used?

Communicative Language Teaching	( )
The Natural Approach	( )
Cooperative Language Learning	( )
Content-Based Instruction	( )
Task-Based Language Teaching	( )
Cognitive Academic Language Learning	( )
Total Physical Response	( )
Whole Language Approach	( )
Grammar Translation Method	( )
Others _____	( )

4. Which of the following activities are used?

Whole-group activities	( )
Individual activities	( )
Group work activities	( )

5. Which of the following aspects of the lesson plan were applied in the class?

Time	( )
Lesson topic	( )
Objectives	( )

Warm-up activities	( )
Introduction of the new topic	( )
Guided or individual practice	( )
Review/Assessment/Feedback	( )
Materials and resources	( )

6. Which of the following aspects have been considered by the teacher?

Discipline	( )
Feedback	( )
Activities management	( )
Time management	( )

7. How many students are there in the classroom?

10 - 15	( )	16 - 25	( )	26 - 30	( )	31 - more	( )

8. Do students have enough space to move and participate in dynamic activities?

YES ( )	NO ( )

9. Is the seating arrangement appropriate for the teaching-learning process?

YES ( )	NO ( )
NOTES:	

_____

_____

10. Which of the following resources are there in the classroom to facilitate teaching?

TV	( )
Tape/Cd recorder	( )
Computer(s)	( )
Projector(s)	( )
Smartboard	( )
Supplementary materials	( )
Others	( )

11. In which percentage does the teacher use English in class?

25 %	( )	50 %	( )	75 %	( )	100 %	( )

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW

A1	Where are you from? Where do you live?
A2	Where did you learn English? How long have you studied English? Which subject was the most difficult during your major?
B1	How long have you been teaching English? Which skill is easier for you to teach? Would you like to continue studying? Why?
B2	What are the advantages or disadvantages of teaching English in a "non-English speaking country"? What are the main problems a teacher faces when teaching English in Ecuador?
C1	What social benefits are derived from learning English? What is the most important reward of teaching English as a profession?
C2	What are the benefits that come from teachers staying more time in the educational institutions? What is the difference between teaching English as foreign language (EFL) and teaching English as a second language (ESL)?

TEACHER'S LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:					
C2 ( )	C1 ( )	B2 ( )	B1 ( )	A2 ( )	A1 ( )

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

CARRERA DE INGLES

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. ¿Te gusta aprender Inglés?

YES ( )	NO ( )

2. ¿Las actividades (juegos, trabajos en grupo y trabajos individuales) que se realizan en clase te motivan a aprender Inglés?

YES ( )	NO ( )

3. Consideras que las actividades realizadas en clase son:

Muy fáciles ( )	Fáciles ( )	Difíciles ( )	Muy difíciles ( )

4. ¿Te gusta la forma de enseñanza del idioma Inglés que usa tu profesor?

YES ( )	NO ( )

¿Por qué?

_____

_____

5. ¿Tu profesor realiza actividades variadas que te permiten interactuar con tus compañeros de clase?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

6. ¿Tu profesor utiliza Inglés la mayor parte del tiempo en la clase?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

7. ¿Tu profesor controla la disciplina en la clase?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

8. ¿Tu profesor les asigna un tiempo determinado para el desarrollo de cada actividad?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

9. ¿Luego de cada actividad realizada, tu profesor te explica en qué fallaste y en qué debes mejorar?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

10. ¿Las instrucciones que da el profesor para realizar las actividades en clase y extra clase son claras?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

11. ¿Consideras que el tamaño del salón de clase te permite trabajar de una manera cómoda?

| YES ( ) | NO ( ) |

12. ¿Consideras que el número de estudiantes te favorece para aprende de mejor manera el Inglés?

YES	( )	NO	( )

13. ¿Te gusta la forma en la que el profesor adecúa los pupitres para trabajar en los diferentes tipos de actividades?

YES	( )	NO	( )

14. ¿Se utilizan en clase recursos tales como televisión, grabadora, computadora, pizarras inteligentes, etc.?

YES	( )	NO	( )

THANKS!!!!!